

1903.

NEW ZEALAND.

GOLDFIELDS AND MINES COMMITTEE:

REPORTS ON THE MINING ACT AMENDMENT BILL AND THE COAL-MINES ACT AMENDMENT BILL; AND ON THE PETITIONS OF J. BAILEY AND OTHERS, E. A. GRAHAM AND OTHERS, THOMAS YOUNG AND OTHERS, G. NEWTON AND OTHERS, R. McMILLAN AND OTHERS, E. MARTIN AND OTHERS, J. JENKINS AND OTHERS, AND A. STEELE AND OTHERS ON BEHALF OF THE AMALGAMATED MINERS' UNION.

Reports brought up 21st August and 3rd September, and ordered to be printed.

ORDERS OF REFERENCE.

Extracts from the Journals of the House of Representatives.

FRIDAY, THE 3RD DAY OF JULY, 1903.

Ordered, "That Standing Order No. 211 be suspended, and that a Goldfields and Mines Committee, consisting of sixteen members, be appointed, to whom shall be referred all matters relating to mining and all Bills relating to mines, with power to call for persons and papers, five to be a quorum: the Committee to consist of Mr. J. Allen, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Colvin, Mr. W. Fraser, Mr. Herdman, Mr. Herries, Mr. Kidd, Mr. R. McKenzie, Mr. Millar, Hon. C. H. Mills, Mr. Moss, Mr. Reid, Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, Mr. Smith, Mr. Witheford, and the mover."—(Hon. Mr. McGOWAN.)

WEDNESDAY, THE 22ND DAY OF JULY, 1903.

Ordered, "That the Mining Act Amendment Bill be referred to the Goldfields and Mines Committee."

THURSDAY, THE 30TH DAY OF JULY, 1903.

Ordered, "That the Coal-mines Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) be referred to the Goldfields and Mines Committee."

PETITION.

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the House of Representatives in Parliament assembled.

THE petition of the undersigned miners and workmen employed in gold and coal mining in the Provincial District of Auckland, New Zealand, humbly sheweth:—

1. That your petitioners are engaged in mining operations.

2. That the time workers are employed underground in each shift is at present too long, considering the unhealthy nature of the employment, and we respectfully ask that your honourable House will enact that forty-four (44) hours from surface to surface shall be the maximum time that an underground worker shall be employed in each week, to be divided into eight hours from surface to surface for five days in the week, and four hours from surface to surface on Saturdays.

We submit to your honourable House the following reasons for your consideration as to why you should give effect to our petition:—

(a.) Mine-air is heated naturally, since for every 60 ft. we descend from the surface after the first 50 ft. there is an increase in temperature of one degree, and the temperature is also further heated by the burning of lights, blasting operations, decaying timber, the presence of men and horses, underground engines, &c.

(b.) The principal gases met with in mines are, leaving out oxygen and nitrogen which compose fresh air—(1) carbon-monoxide, (2) carbon-dioxide, (3) sulphuretted hydrogen, (4) carburetted hydrogen.

(1.) Carbon-monoxide is a light gas, having no taste or smell, but being very poisonous, air containing 1 per cent. being fatal to life. This gas, which is known to miners as "white damp," is hard to detect, since lights will burn in it where men cannot live. It is found chiefly in badly ventilated mines where blasting operations are carried on.